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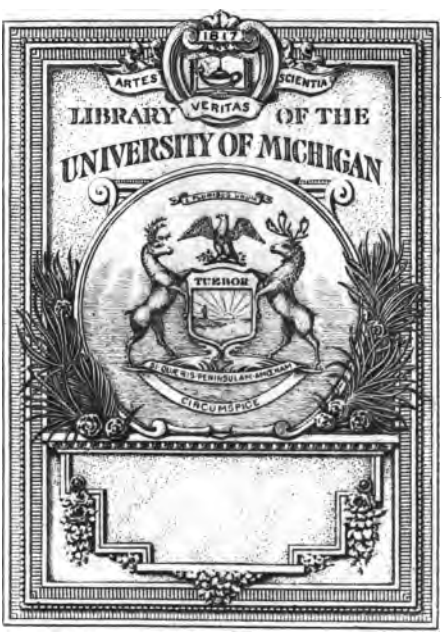
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THE VOICE OF GOD TO THE CHURCHES.

A

SERMON

ON THE

Death

OF THE

REVEREND

GEORGE CRAN, AUGUSTUS DESGRANGES, AND JONATHAN BRAIN,

MISSIONARIES IN INDIA

FROM

THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

PREACHED AT GOSPORT, MARCH 17, 1811,

BY DAVID BOGUE.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,
NO. 50, CORNHILL, UPSTAIRS.
1811.

BV
4275
B68
1811

Oberlin Coll. Libr.
ef
11-19-1925
JAN 17 1945

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SERMON.

HOSEA, xiv, 9,

WHO IS WISE, AND HE SHALL UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS? PRUDENT, AND HE SHALL KNOW THEM? FOR THE WAYS OF THE LORD ARE RIGHT, AND THE JUST SHALL WALK IN THEM; BUT THE TRANSGRESSORS SHALL FALL THEREIN.

GOD is continually imparting to men instruction calculated to make them wise unto salvation. The volume of sacred Scripture, and the dispensations of Providence have both this end in view. Each throws additional light on the other, and each enforces the counsel which the other gives. Ordinary events too often pass away without exciting suitable reflections, or producing their proper effects in many who profess to be the disciples of Christ. But remarkable dispensations sometimes occur, which rouse the attention of the most careless, and compel them to cry out, "This is the finger of God; what meaneth he by this astonishing act?" To you, my brethren, whose souls long for the conversion of the heathen, and who are exerting yourselves for this most important and glorious of ends, God is now presenting such a dispensation. We naturally wish for success in this great work, and our expectations are sanguine: "It is the cause of God; his heart is set upon it, and it will assuredly succeed." So far we argue well; but too many are apt to add, "God will make it prosper; he will crown it with the smiles of his providence; he will repress the wrath of its enemies; he will preserve the lives of his missionaries wherever they go, for to his power all climates are alike." But instead of these charming scenes, which fill the spectator with delight, and which exist only in imagination, the real landscape is of a very different form and color. Some missionaries prove unfaithful or unsteady, and unfit for their office, and others are driven away from the country which was the field of labor: but what is still more affecting, one missionary, after arriving from the uttermost end

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of the earth at the place of his intended exertions, is snatched away by death; a second, after the attainment of the language of the country, so as to be able to preach the Gospel; and a third, after being qualified to translate the scriptures into the native tongue. Thus Jehovah acts, while to us there appears an absolute necessity for their continuance in life and for their labors.

Such an event has occurred to us, and we have been called bitterly to lament the decease of three of our missionaries in the eastern parts of the world; of Jonathan Brain after the short abode of four months in the country destined for his future labors; of George Cran by more than three years study qualified to preach the Gospel to the heathen; and of Augustus Desgranges, who was enabled by five years of vigorous application to translate the Scriptures into their language.

The first whom God removed by death was George Cran, the son of a farmer in the parish of Forgue, in Aberdeenshire. When he was brought to the knowledge of the truth, he became a member of the church at Huntley, under the pastoral care of George Cowie, a man of eminent piety, talents, zeal, and usefulness. Our young friend's labors began with the teaching of a Sunday school in a neighboring village. Thirsting for more important service, he offered himself to the Missionary Society, and being accepted, was sent down to the seminary at Gosport, in 1801, where he continued between two and three years in the diligent pursuit of his studies. Entire devotedness to the Redeemer, humility, meekness, prudence, and ardent love for souls shone forth conspicuously in him, and formed his character and deportment. His heart was among the heathen, and his highest wish to preach Christ to them. No student ever left the seminary who had excited warmer affections in the disciples of Christ, and a more tender concern for his prosperity and success.

In a visit which he paid to his friends in the north, just before his departure for India, he warmly pleaded the cause of the heathen world in every sermon. His eminent spirituality and fervent zeal made a deep impression on the minds of the people of God, who expressed their fears that so precious a life would be but of short duration. He told them himself, that he did not expect to live long, nor to see many converted; "but," said he, "if I may be but permitted to remove a little of the rubbish, and make the way plainer to others; if I may but hew out a few of the rough stones, and leave them to others to polish, I shall think myself highly honored and my life well spent."

He arrived at Madras early in 1805, and after residing there for some time he went to Vizigapatam, where he and his fellow laborer, Mr. Desgranges, founded a mission which we hope, will continue till the Gospel have free course and be glorified in that part of India; and there he spent the last years of his life. His letters from that place were frequent and full, and display a meekness of wisdom, a spirituality of mind, a zeal for missionary objects, and an anxiety to learn the language that he might preach Christ, from which might easily be seen his only business was with the souls of men.

For a considerable time he enjoyed good health, and there was a pleasing prospect that he might be spared for many years; but a bilious fever, in Nov. 1808, brought him to the gates of death. He recovered in some degree, and the general who commanded in that district invited Mr. Cran to accompany him in his journey round the province, in hopes that it might prove beneficial to him. In that journey he finished his course. The letters which he wrote to Mr. Desgranges shew the frame of his mind, and his employment during the last weeks of his life. In one of them he says, "I am sorry to say that this leaves me in a weak state. However I was able to go into the village in the evening and address the poor heathen. They rejoiced to hear; and I was constrained to pray that God would be pleased to spare my life a little longer, that I may enjoy the pleasure of proclaiming the good news. I find this does me good." In another, from a different place: "I have had much conversation with the natives, at least once or twice every day, and sometimes with considerable numbers of both sexes. In short I have spent many pleasant hours with them, and found many desirous to here more of the Gospel. Travelling among the natives and proclaiming the good news of salvation is certainly delightful work." Such were the sentiments and feelings of this good missionary of Jesus Christ, who in less than three weeks afterwards, on the sixth of January, 1809, closed a useful life of service to Jesus his master. Mr. Desgranges arrived a few hours after his decease, and conveyed his remains to the grave in the burying place at Chicacole.

Augustus Desgranges was descended from ancestors who were professors of the pure religion in France, and left their native country in order to preserve a good conscience. He was born and educated in London, and there was brought to a participation of the blessings of the Gospel. He and Mr. Cran

came to Gosport at the same time, and they left the seminary together. His deportment while there was in all respects agreeable to the character of a missionary student. His abilities were good, his mind active and discriminating; he had a cheerfulness and vivacity which were extremely pleasing, and his heart was wholly in his work. He and Mr. Cran, between them had all the qualifications of a good missionary of Christ; and the two together formed a beautiful and an eminently useful whole. Their affection too for each other was peculiarly tender, like that of David and Jonathan of old. With the exception of some months, when Mr. Desgranges was obliged to leave Vizigapatam on account of ill health, they labored together there till Mr. Cran's decease, when the whole concerns of the mission devolved on him till the arrival of Mr. Lee and Mr. Gordon.

The translation of the Gospels, which had been begun during the life of Mr. Cran, he carried on with the assistance of Anandarayer, a converted bramin, whom God appears to have raised up for this purpose before his decease, and he had completed the three first gospels. It is recorded of the venerable Bede, that he was employed in translating the gospel by John, when he was seized with the illness which terminated in his death. Notwithstanding his infirmities he continued the work. At last feeling his departure drawing nigh, he called to his amanuensis to make haste, and when he had just dictated the last verse, he gave up the ghost. Mr. Desgranges was earnestly desirous to finish the translation of Luke's Gospel, and labored with extraordinary diligence that it might be in readiness to be conveyed by a friend, to Calcutta, for the press,

On the fourth of July, 1810, he was seized with a bilious fever, which was extremely violent, and occasioned the most excruciating pains. Medical aid was used, but used in vain. Though unable to speak much, his mind was calm and serene from first to last. When asked what he was most concerned about, he replied, "the affairs of the mission, and especially the translation of the Scriptures; but (said he) God can carry it on without my means, so that my life is not necessary on that account." A number of persons standing round his bed, on being asked whether he wished to meet them in heaven, he answered, "O yes! and if I could, I would now tell them how good the Lord has been to me." Inquiry being made whether he was happy in the prospect of death and eternity, he immediately lifted up his right hand for he was unable to speak: indeed he rejoiced much in the hope of being with Christ, and of meeting in

heaven his much beloved brother, Cran. He departed this life on the twelfth of July, 1810, aged thirty years, leaving behind him an afflicted widow and two children. Those who knew him amidst his missionary labors, bear testimony that he was a truly devoted servant of Christ; in disposition mild and gentle; in conduct modest and upright; affectionate in every relation, a friend of peace, a man of prayer, much acquainted with his own heart, that he depended wholly on the influences of the Holy Spirit, and his soul longed for the conversion of the heathen.

George Cran and Augustus Desgranges were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were not far divided.

Jonathan Brain was born in the neighborhood of Bristol. From his childhood he had many serious thoughts about the salvation of his soul; but those impressions of Divine truth which were the means of changing his heart, he conceived to have been made by the ministry of Mr. Jay. In 1806, he was sent to the missionary seminary where his improvements were very considerable. He possessed excellent talents, an acute and penetrating mind, assiduous and persevering application; and his heart was wholly devoted to the missionary work. In May, 1809, he sailed for India, and after residing some months at the Cape of Good Hope, where his public services to the troops were peculiarly useful, he arrived at Madras in February, 1810. After continuing there a few weeks, in the course of which he assisted in the ordination of Mr. Loveless, Mr. Pritchett his fellow laborer and he sailed for Rangoon, at which they arrived in the following month.

He immediately began to apply to the study of the Birman tongue, and was making a pleasing progress, when on the twenty-sixth of June he was seized with a dysentery, and after an illness of seven days, on the second of July he departed this life, aged twenty-four years. Such was the severity of his illness that he could speak little, but what he did say was the language of a true disciple of Christ. While death was before his eyes, he said, "I can look forward to an eternity of blessedness through the merits of my Redeemer." At another time, the sixtieth hymn of the second book of Dr. Watts being read to him at his request, he spoke of the support which he experienced from the important truths which it contained. On the first of July, which was the Lord's day; he conversed in a manner which displayed the consolations of his soul, and he said,

"I think I have begun a Sabbath which will never end." He died on the following day.

We were pleasing ourselves with the hopes of their continuing to labor for many years in the neglected fields of heathen idolatry and mahomedan delusion. That their humble and zealous efforts would be crowned with success; and that they would be spared to taste the unspeakable delight of seeing hundreds of perishing sinners converted to the faith of Christ, was our fond desire and expectation; but the supreme Ruler of the universe had otherwise determined, and we are called to bewail their death. In such painful circumstances multitudes of pious people cry out, "God is against us, he frowns on our designs, he takes away our missionaries; his time is not come, or we are not the persons whom he designs to honor with success; it is an intimation to us to desist." If others do not go so far, yet they are greatly discouraged; and if they persevere, it is with languor and despondency; faith and hope are scarcely able to lift up their heads, prayer grows faint, and exertions lose all their energy.

The evils arising from such sentiments are many and great, dishonorable to God, and injurious to the souls of men. Of what consequence is it that if possible they may be banished from the mind! Perhaps it may be found on inquiry that there is no reason to conclude that we are to regard the death of missionaries as an intimation of the Divine will that we should cease from our attempts for the conversion of the heathen; that while there is cause for lamentation there is none for despondency; and that by such dispensations of providence, God designs to convey to us instructions which will be beneficial to his cause in our continued efforts among the heathen.

What then may be the design of God in this afflictive dispensation of providence, and what lessons of instruction would he thereby convey to us? To prosecute this inquiry is the object which I have in view in this discourse; and to which we are earnestly called by the words of the text. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein." And O thou Spirit of wisdom and grace, descend for the help of the speaker, and accompany the word with thy powerful blessing.

First. I beg your attention to some general considerations to guide our judgment concerning such events. And,

SECONDLY, I shall endeavor to point out those lessons of instruction which it is the design of God that they should teach.

FIRST. Let me call your attention to some general considerations which will serve to guide our judgment concerning such events.

1. Consider that there is nothing uncommon in the event which we deplore. No strange thing has happened to our missionaries. The sacred Scriptures furnish us with instances of a similar kind. Turn your eyes to the first man whose ministry is recorded in the New Testament; listen to the character which is given of him by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the testimony borne to the success of his ministry. "But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea I say unto you, and more than a prophet. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." But in the third year, it is supposed, of his ministry he was removed by the stroke of death; Herod's executioner perpetrated the deed. But whether it be a fever, a dysentery, or the sword which is the instrument of death, is of little moment; all instruments are in the hands of God and under his control, and are alike in this most important effect, that they produce a removal from the field of labor. But it may perhaps be supposed, that the apostles of Christ will enjoy the privilege of a long continuance in life, though it was not granted to his forerunner. Christ chose but twelve men to be his disciples and eye witnesses of his life and death and resurrection, with a view to their being afterwards his missionaries to all the world. One of them betrayed him, and afterwards went and hanged himself. Eleven remained faithful: will not they be preserved? If any difference be made among them, Peter and James and John who were the most favored disciples, who alone were present at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, on the mount of transfiguration, and in the garden of Gethsemane; surely they will all be spared to tell these wondrous tales over the face of the earth. No, we reason wrong. After some years of labor, Herod slew James the brother of John with the sword, full fifty years before his brother John's decease. Stephen, one of the first deacons, but more eminent as a preacher for his superior zeal and his superior success, promised to be one of the most

glorious instruments in the propagation of the Gospel: he surely will be the peculiar care of divine Providence. Be silent O man, and adore, before he has completed one year's labor in the vineyard, the stroke of death removes him from all his exertions and all his success. But why multiply instances of the servants. Behold the Lord and Master himself. What ministry can be compared to his? What a blessing was it to the world. But in the fourth year of his ministry, death removes him from his labors. Keep your eyes, my brethren, fixed on these wonderful examples, and in silent submission bow to the inscrutable dispensations of Jehovah. I might descend through the different ages of the church, and present you with a long list of names, of Brainerds among missionaries, of Janeway, of Gray, of Tennent among ministers, who were little more than shown to the world as extraordinary men both for their spirit and their success; and then death was sent to call them away from all their useful services in the church of God. Are you not constrained to acknowledge that it is not an uncommon though a painful affliction which has befallen you, and for which you mourn.

2. It is not to be considered as an evidence that God in his sovereignty does not design the salvation of the people in those countries where our missionaries died. From the false reasonings of men on subjects of this nature, very fatal consequences frequently ensue. In a town or village in England, a minister was preaching the Gospel with success, but he was called away by death. From that time no man cared for their souls; the people were left as sheep without a shepherd, and were scattered abroad; ignorance gained ground, and the garden of the Lord became a howling wilderness. Perhaps some one may say, "it was the will of God that that place should remain destitute of the Gospel." It is no more the will of God, than that Cain should murder Abel; there is in both instances the Divine permission of the blackest crimes. Had neighboring ministers and congregations done their duty by lending their aid, and had proper exertions been made for finding a successor, the Gospel might have continued there to the present time. The same reasoning is applicable to a heathen country. One missionary who was laboring in it dies; a second is removed also by death, "God in his sovereignty has determined that that country should remain ignorant of the Gospel." No: thou art speaking wickedly for God. If that country continues without the light of the Gospel,

it is owing to the impious sloth of the Christian church; the criminal negligence of the disciples of Jesus is the cause. The voice of Providence in such a dispensation, the voice of Scripture, the voice of God is not, "forsake that country," but "send more missionaries to help them."

What regard should we think to be due to the reasoning of him who would say, "Because John the Baptist was put to death in Judea, no more souls were to be saved there. Or because Christ was crucified, James slain with the sword, Stephen stoned, and the rest of the disciples banished from the country by persecution, an entire stop was to be put to the conversion of sinners in that land?" Myriads of souls were afterwards brought to the faith of Christ. Or because Peter was crucified, and Paul beheaded in the capital of the Roman empire, no more souls in that city were to be brought to the knowledge of the truth? For centuries afterwards the church at Rome was famous over all the Christian world: Banish then, my brethren, these false ideas of the divine sovereignty from your minds, for it has proved fatal to multitudes of souls.

3. We learn from this painful event, that many parts of the Divine government are beyond the ken of man. No words can more properly express this sentiment than those of Zophar, Job xi, 7, 8, 9; "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." To which the words of David, Psa. cxxxix, 6, form a proper close: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." How applicable are these humiliating confessions to the conduct of Jehovah in the disposal of his servants, and the period of their lives. Were we permitted to govern the world, the wicked would be swept away with the besom of destruction, but the righteous preserved alive: useless persons who are a burden to society we would remove by death, but spare all who were benefactors to mankind. The enemies of religion we should destroy; but its friends, and especially those who are active in promoting it, should live to three-score years and ten, or fourscore years. Missionaries among the heathen would be our particular care, and their days lengthened out to those of the patriarchs of old. But God removes some of them before they have lived out half their days. We would not

do this. But are not we children of folly, and he infinitely wise and also infinitely good? In us goodness is but the drop of the bucket; it is in him the fathomless abyss of the mighty ocean. He cannot err nor do wrong: "His work is perfect and all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

Behold the mysterious way in which God disposes of his servants, displaying his sovereignty, but sovereignty under the direction of wisdom, rectitude, and love; for such is the sovereignty of our God. Some of them he continues to a good old age; for thirty, forty, or fifty years they labor in his vineyard; and when covered with gray hairs they are received into the joy of their Lord. He calls others away in the midst of their days: to all appearance they might have ministered with acceptance and usefulness for many years; but he commissioned his messenger to bring them home in the vigor of life. Others of his servants appear in the ardor of youth, peculiarly qualified for his service, just bursting forth to the surprise and delight of the church of God. He only shews them to the world, and then he takes them away. "See," as if he had said, "how exquisitely this vessel is formed for its Master's use," and while we gaze at the sight, he breaks it by the hands of death, and throws it into the grave. His all-sufficiency can do without it, his love receives the soul into heaven, wisdom decides that this is best; while to us sovereignty alone appears, for "Jehovah holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it."

This dispensation presents to us the Lord Jesus Christ performing one and not an unimportant part of his office as king and head of his church. "I am, (says he) the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Missionaries are the servants of Christ, and of all his servants they are most peculiarly the objects of his affection and care; for it is to them he peculiarly says, "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." As he walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, they are ever in his presence and in his sight. All his dispensations towards them are mercy and truth. Love shines forth in all his dealings, in every act, especially in the most important, and what act is more important than death? To remove a missionary by death is an act of infinite wisdom, of perfect rectitude, of most ardent love; and in perfect conso-

nance with Christ's affection to his church, and compassion for the souls of men, and his earnest desire to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession. But while we behold the glorious Redeemer thus exercising his authority, we humbly cry to him: "Thy way, O Lord, is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known!" We dare not say as Peter, "Bid us come unto thee." If we attempt to enter the abyss, we shall be overwhelmed. We will stand on the shore, and adoring exclaim, "O the depth of the riches of thy wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out!"

"But," says one, "how can the death of John the Baptist, of Stephen, and of James be acts of wisdom and of love?" Nay, but who art thou, O man, that arraignest the Divine government, that findest fault with the acts of the Redeemer, and chargest him with a want of wisdom and of love to his missionaries? Rather confess thy ignorance, humbly bow before his throne, and be persuaded that in this act of calling his servants away which so much displeases thee, the Lord Jesus Christ is promoting his own glory, the happiness of his servants, the good of his church, and the conversion of the heathen. As to the way in which these glorious ends are produced by so unlikely means, we must for the present rest satisfied with the assurance which he has given us,—"what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Secondly. Such dispensations of providence contain lessons of instruction fitted to influence the conduct of Christians in their various offices and situations.

1. By these instances of mortality missionaries are taught to labor with all their might. Those who preach the Gospel are in danger from the same temptations as their hearers. In the parable of the ten virgins it is mentioned, that "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Missionaries need to be warned against lukewarmness as much as any other disciple of Christ. While they continue in health, and enjoy outward prosperity, inordinate attachment to the world and languor in the discharge of the duties of their office may seize upon them as well as upon other ministers of the Gospel. Being in a foreign land, and viewing the inhabitants as people of a different lineage, they are not so deeply affected by the death of any of them as we are by the decease of the members of our

congregation. But the death of a missionary, of a brother speaks to them with the voice of thunder: "Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto them that wait for their Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh, ye may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."

When the Lord Jesus Christ heard of the death of John the Baptist, he retired to a solitary place, no doubt for meditation and prayer, and the improvement of the mournful event. When missionaries hear of a brother's death, it rouses the soul to extraordinary feeling; and every power is awakened to the most serious consideration and fervent prayer. A train of profitable meditation succeeds: the evil of sin; the excellence of the Savior and his salvation; the worth of souls; the command of Christ to his servants to save them; the infinite importance of activity and zeal in the service of Christ; the uncertainty of life; the nearness of the eternal state; the unspeakable value of the heavenly glory; the death of a brother in the faith and hope of the Gospel: these prove a stimulus to exertion, they give wings to dependence, and furnish fuel for the fire of love. One man does the work of two, and does it with an energy which the people feel; and it has, through the Divine blessing, an unspeakably more powerful effect.

2. Young persons training up for the missionary service receive instruction of peculiar value from this event. Here are elder brothers gone down to the dust of death; and while with a sorrowful heart you look into their graves, and amidst your musing the fire burns, your hearts are hot within you, and you speak thus with your tongues, "such may be my lot. Soon after I set my foot in an heathen land, the unhealthiness of the climate may sow the seeds of disease in my mortal frame, and in a few months may bring me, as it did Jonathan Brain, to an early grave. Or after some years of incessant toil, when I have gained so much knowledge of the language as to be enabled to preach, and I am tasting the first joy of exhibiting before the eyes of the heathen the treasures of redeeming love, and inviting them to receive without money and without price 'gold tried in the fire that they may be rich, and white raiment that they may be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness may not appear,' like George

Cran my constitution may be so enfeebled as to sink under debility; and when warm with the desire and hope of saving a multitude of souls, I may hear my Master say to me, 'go thou thy way, for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.' Or if I am permitted to continue longer in life, and am engaged in the glorious work of translating the sacred Scriptures, going on with eagerness and delight, rejoicing in the progress, and looking forward with transporting pleasure to the time when I shall be able to present this inestimable gift to the heathen: in the midst of this service, the same fever which carried off Augustus Desgranges, may seize me, and consign me to death and the grave."

Such reflections will, I trust, not be in vain. Will they not suggest the following purposes of the heart; "I see the uncertainty of life. Let the world be of less esteem in my eyes than it ever was, and my soul be wholly crucified to it by the cross of Christ. As I may have but a short time to live, let me be entirely devoted to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and seek the highest eminence of personal religion. I will apply to my studies with the utmost vigor that I may be qualified for more extensive usefulness during the brief space of my earthly pilgrimage. I will from this day endeavor to do all the good that I possibly can, in every way and in every place; this shall be my business now, and my business when I am in my field of labor among the heathen; so that if I be called away by death in the midst of my days, or before I have reached the meridian of life, I may be able to present to my Redeemer souls saved by me, as evidences that I have not run in vain nor labored in vain; and which shall be my joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord?"

3. Important instruction is also conveyed to those who may have it in view to give themselves up to the missionary service. That there are many such in the churches of Christ I have the fullest confidence. Read here a lesson of no ordinary use. In conjunction with pure principles, considerations of an inferior nature are apt to mingle themselves in the minds of the disciples of Christ. While the young Christian is supremely influenced by a desire to promote the glory of Christ and the salvation of the heathen, other things may creep in imperceptibly, and have more weight in his determination than he is aware. The dignity of the office; the respectability of the station; the view of multitudes of converts listening with delight, and look-

ing up to him as a father; the honor of planting many churches; the fame of success through all the churches of Christ, and long life in the service of the Redeemer among the heathen; these create an enthusiasm in the soul, and give an ardor to his desires, which he conceived to proceed wholly from a higher source.

But behold, my young friend, a different scene presenting itself to view. Mr. Owen died while a student at the missionary seminary; and so may you: or if permitted to reach a heathen land, it may be only that after a few months you may there find a grave. Or perhaps a few years may be granted you; and then the unwelcome tidings of your death are brought to the society and to your friends, and you are known in the churches for your endeavors to do good, but not for their success.

"But why thus discourage (say some) those young persons who would come forward to the service of the heathen? If any one is discouraged by the representation, and says, "I expected the most soothing invitations to the work, but instead of these, I meet with what appears to me a harsh repulse. I believe I shall give up all thoughts of being a missionary." I dare not, my young friend, follow any other steps than those of the Master who when applied to by those who desired to become his disciples, had this answer ever on his lips: "If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." I will give thee no encouragement on other terms. Thou mayest be a Christian, but it is not every Christian that has the spirit of a missionary. Thou hast not that ardor of soul, and that peculiar self-denial which a missionary must possess. Lay aside the thoughts of that most difficult office, and choose a situation at home more congenial to thy disposition.

But there are other youths not terrified at the prospect; or if a transient timidity and momentary trouble be produced, meditation and prayer banish them from your heart, and your courage is restored. To you I call, to you I say, look the danger full in the face. View death taking one away while a missionary student, a second after a few months residence in a heathen land, a third after three years, and a fourth after five; and consider that the one or the other of these may be thy lot. Art thou willing to undertake the service? Dost thou say, "None of these things move me:" this world I give up and all worldly prospects: I devote myself to Jesus Christ, and desire to promote his glory among the heathen. Whether my life is to be long or short I leave entirely to him to decide, and I can cheerfully engage in

his service with all discouragements in view. May I but be faithful to him, and honor him while I live; then let him send death to call me away when he pleases; it will be to receive a crown of everlasting glory." To thee I say, come in thou blessed of the Lord, and offer thyself for the service of the heathen. The death of so many laborers has a voice which cries aloud for help: and there is something truly dignified, when inquiry is made, "Whom shall we send, and who will go for us," at such a time to step forward and say, "here am I, send me."

4. Ministers of Christ in this country receive also instruction from the afflictive event. "Might not one of the surviving missionaries, Mr. Lee or Mr. Pritchett thus address us: "You are placed in a situation unspeakably more comfortable and easy than ours; you are in your native land, in a healthful climate, in the bosom of your relatives, in the midst of Christian friends, with fellow laborers who are affectionate brethren all round you: every thing is congenial to your taste. We are in a foreign land, ten thousand miles from the place which gave us birth; the climate is unfavorable to our constitution, and among a people of different color, manners, and religion,—all strangers to us and we to them. At first we were dumb before them; as yet we know not their language, and we must toil for years with painful assiduity to attain it, while from the irksome labor our health and strength decay. By the time we are able to preach or to translate the sacred Scriptures, like our dear beloved brethren we may be cut off by the stroke of death. Remember us continually at the throne of grace; plead our cause with those who living at their ease, may be extreme to mark our infirmities; strengthen our hands in our arduous task, and be Aarons and Hurs to hold them up; and favor us with all the assistance in your power, that the name of Christ may be made known by us among the perishing heathen."

Ought we not to answer, "Yes, brethren, whom we highly esteem and love for your work's sake, we will remember you while you are executing the most difficult part of the Savior's commission by endeavoring to turn the pagan nations from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and will give you all the assistance and consolation in our power: especially we will not cease from day to day to entreat our Master in your behalf, for he can do infinitely more for you than we."

But my brethren in the ministry this is not all the improvement we should make of the event. We are all taught the uncertainty of life; and ought we not to work while it is day with increasing diligence and zeal in the vineyard of our Lord, seeing the night of death cometh when no man can work, and not one soul more can be saved by us through all eternity. As this lesson is taught us by men who left their native country and all its enjoyments and endearments in the service of Christ, ought not we to feel more powerfully our obligations to be wholly devoted to our Redeemer and his cause? In such circumstances is it suitable that years, or months, or weeks, or even days should glide away in inglorious ease, or in worldly, or even literary pursuits? God forbid that we should so sacrilegiously profane the sacred time (for to us all time should be sacred) by spending our days in any other way than seeking the salvation of precious souls. Shall not the talents which God has given us, whatever they may be, from this hour be all employed in the Redeemer's cause? and shall we not strive with all our might to improve these talents to the utmost by reading, by meditation, by preaching, by exhortation in season and out of season, and above all by prayer, that we may be capable of more useful and extensive service; and shall not that improvement be also devoted to the glory of Christ? Yes, my brethren, let us stir up the gift that is in us to the utmost, and aim at the approbation of our Master, and to hear from his lips these words of love: "He hath done what he could: well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

5. This dispensation of Providence teaches many useful lessons to every Christian.

It is designed to try their spirit, that it may be seen whether they will continue stedfast in the support of the Redeemer's cause. How many acts of the Divine government are of this kind? With his own hand Jehovah appears to throw down a stumbling-block in the way; men are told of it, and exhorted to avoid it. Though it lies straight before them, by turning either to the right hand or the left they may avoid it, and then continue their course. But if they will go forward they must fall over it, and sustain a very serious injury. Such is the event before us, and such the design of God. "It is all in vain says one; some missionaries have been driven from their field of labor, and now three are taken away by death. It is a hopeless cause, and shall

no longer have my support." Is this your determination? Pause ere it be final; because the danger is unspeakably great. The dispensation answers the end of God; but it is a dreadful end to thee, for it has brought to light that thou art, if not destitute, at least wofully deficient in the faith, the hope, the perseverance, the patience, and the zeal of a disciple of Christ. How lamentable, O man, is the discovery which it has made of thy heart and of thy character! How great also is thy danger! If thou refuse to promote the glory of the Redeemer in the salvation of the heathen, what if he should say, "I will no more visit that soul with one ray of light, with one smile of my countenance, with one breath of divine influence:" thou art undone. But O betray not such a spirit; listen to the voice of this mournful dispensation, and shew that thou hast learnt wisdom by making this inquiry, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"

God is also teaching you the greatness and difficulty of the work of missionaries in order to excite your sympathy for them. To preach the Gospel at any time, and in any place how difficult! But how much is the difficulty increased when the servant of Christ is called to preach in Hindostan, in Ava, or in China? To be able to speak the language is an Herculean labor: to bear the heat or insalubrity of the climate is equally trying. To have wisdom and strength to endure the opposition and enmity of Satan, of the heathen, and of the world, and the unbelief and depravity of the heart—well may we cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And should not the consideration of these things fill your heart with sympathy for those who are engaged in the work of missions? They leave all that is dear to them; they take their lives in their hand and go to fix their abode at the uttermost ends of the earth in an unhealthful climate; they study and labor amidst relaxation and weariness from excessive heat, and some sink under the weight of disease; but in life and in death their aim is to bring the perishing heathen to the faith of Christ and eternal blessedness. Persons thus living and thus dying have they not an irresistible claim to your esteem, to your sympathy, and to your prayers? Too many of them meet with censorious critics, who question the purity of their motives, who with eagle eyes pry into their conduct that they may find something to reprehend, and who with illnatured harshness magnify infirmities into crimes. But tell me, ye men of severity, the way in which ye learned wisdom. Was it not acquired in the school of experience? Was not she constrained to smite you on

the loins in order to banish folly from your hearts? Was she not compelled from time to time to repeat the strokes? And are ye so unreasonable, are ye so unjust as to expect that young men who are missionaries should learn wisdom in any other way than you did yourselves? But if the temper of these men is so remote from the spirit of the Gospel, let yours, my Christian friends, bear no resemblance. They who have bid adieu to father and mother, to brothers and sisters, till they meet them in the eternal world; who have given up every earthly prospect of ever having more than a bare support, while their talents gave them a title to expect the comforts of a competence or affluence had they remained at home; and who have nothing to look for but a life of labor and infirmity till death shall remove them into the joy of their Lord, who can give greater evidence of their sincerity and pure intentions than these men? Let them then have your sympathy and your regard.

By this dispensation God is teaching you the exercise of faith in his promises. He has said to his well-beloved Son, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." So extensive is the grant, "that men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." With promises to this effect the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament abound; and the means by which they are to be accomplished is the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. Whatever hindrances may be thrown in the way, whatever opposition may be made by the numerous enemies of God and truth, whatever circumstances may occur from the expulsion of some missionaries from their fields of labor, or the death of others in the midst of usefulness and zeal, you are called to believe that, as God has promised, the Gospel shall triumph over all its foes, and Christ shall reign over the whole earth; and to use the means of his appointment for this purpose with the full assurance of ultimate success. Away then with the pusillanimity of those who are terrified at every blast of opposition, at every storm of unfavorable events. Such mean cowardice dishonors both Christ and his cause, and would be exceedingly discreditable to your character. It becomes you to adopt the language of ancient saints, "God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

There is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early." Ps. xlvi, 1—5. After repeating these words and meditating on them, are you not constrained to say, "I will no more despair of the success of missions, for he is faithful who has promised it."

By such a dispensation it is the design of God also to teach you patience. This is a grace, the existence of which is confined to a present state; and it is called into frequent exercise that "it may have its perfect work, that Christians may be perfect and entire wanting nothing." In the ordinary course of human life how many events appear to have this as their chief end; and in the most important affairs of the church God evidently appears to pursue the same design. We would have every thing done with rapidity and without opposition. "It is for the Redeemer's glory and the happiness of immortal souls; and under the Divine government every thing should conspire to promote these ends, that they may be accomplished without delay." But such plausible reasonings are contradicted by facts. Obstacles occur, opposition is made, delays ensue, nay the most favorable appearances are blasted. These zealous disciples are confounded, they can scarcely refrain from blaming the Divine conduct, and murmuring at the dispensations of his providence. Why did he not prevent the stroke of death? Why did he not arrest the arm of that adversary who drove away missionaries from the field of labor? Stop! rash and unwise man. Refrain from matters which are too high for thee. Look at the state of things in the beginning of the Gospel and be wise. Then, we know, it was the grand design of the Almighty to propagate it in the world. But how strange his conduct must appear to thee! No sooner do the Apostles begin to preach than they are opposed, imprisoned, and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus; the disciples are persecuted; a preacher is put to death; believers are driven from their country; an apostle is slain with the sword; and one more eminent than the rest is for years in a state of confinement. All these strange things thou viewest with dislike; thy haste cannot bear these impediments. But among other reasons for such dispensations, one end of God is to teach us patience. While he pursues his own mysterious path, we are to continue waiting, laboring, praying, leaving the times and seasons in his hands, assured that in the end all shall be well.

«For the Lord will wait that he may be gracious, he will be exalted that he may have mercy; he is a God of Judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him."

To call the disciples of Christ to continued and greater exertions is another design of God in this dispensation. Christ's missionaries whom we lament, had done the work assigned them; and the Master said to each of them, "go thy way for thou shalt rest." But is the salvation of the heathen to be abandoned on that account? No. The glory of God and the eternal happiness of millions are involved in it. By the exertions of Christians it can still be carried on, and to a greater extent. These exertions are now called for by the voice of Jehovah himself. Let us bless him that there are missionaries still remaining in the field of labor; that there are missionaries on their way to the heathen and others preparing for missionary service. But more are required to fill the places of the deceased, and to accomplish their intended plans. God's work must not be forsaken, or left to languish. The exertions of believers must be continued, nay must be increased. Your support, your influence, your prayers must be all in a greater degree. Nor consider this a hardship or an injury; it is a mercy which God designs for you. Remember that in proportion as your exertions are augmented, the frame of your souls is bettered, the graces of the Spirit are drawn forth into livelier exercise by a more abundant influence; and a larger measure of blessing in his providence either by an increase of substance or of satisfaction in what has been already given, is secured and reserved for you and yours. Let every Christian then consider himself bound by the law of love to God and to the souls of men, to make greater exertions in the missionary cause.

There remains also notwithstanding this dispensation, enough and more than enough to animate hope to the most vigorous exertions which can be made. Think ye that our missionaries have died in vain? Is the death of Jonathan Brain, after a few months residence among the heathen, an useless event? the waste of talents and piety to no valuable end? To himself it was not in vain. Do you conceive it is nothing for a young man to die a missionary in the midst of the heathen, while he was learning their language that he might preach to them Jesus Christ? Did God express his approbation of king David, because it was in his heart to build the temple? And is it not still better when it is not only in a person's heart, but his hands are engaged in